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Congress of the United States

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August 3, 2001

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The Honorable Dan Burton
Chairman
Committee on Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Burton:

On June 15, 2001, I sent you a letter asking you if you had plans to investigate reports in the media that Karl Rove, Senior Advisor to the President, met with senior executives from Intel Corp. who were seeking federal approval of a merger. At the time of the meeting, Mr. Rove owned over \$100,000 of Intel stock and the Bush Administration was apparently divided about whether the merger should be approved. Less than two months after that meeting, the Bush Administration approved the merger.

On June 25, 2001, you replied to my letter. You stated that you would not investigate Mr. Rove because the facts surrounding his involvement with Intel were less serious than examples of conflicts of interest you chose not to investigate during the Clinton administration.

On July 18, 2001, however, you sent a letter to Secretary Thompson asking for personnel information for 82 Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) employees. In that letter you said that the Committee has uncovered substantial conflicts of interest among HHS advisory committee members who considered certain vaccine issues. However, none of the allegations of conflict of interest detailed in your staff report, "Conflicts of Interest in Vaccine Policy Making," involve HHS employees. In fact, I am unaware of any evidence indicating that the HHS employees named in your letter have conflicts of interest. Without any apparent evidence of conflict to act as a factual basis for this request, the request looks like a very broad fishing expedition.

There appears to be an inconsistency in your approach to investigating conflicts of interest. In the case of Karl Rove, where we know that he held certain stocks and that he met with companies in which he was invested, you choose not to investigate. However, in investigating vaccine policy, you take a very different route. Without any factual basis for the inquiry, you have made a very broad request to HHS for information on HHS employees, including confidential financial information.

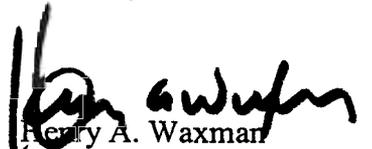
The Honorable Dan Burton

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I ask that you explain to me why the Committee is investigating conflicts of interest involving these HHS employees, where there seems to be no evidence of conflicts, and at the same time refusing to investigate Mr. Rove, where there is substantial evidence of conflicts of interest.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Minority Member

cc: Members of the Committee on Government Reform